

SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING

Like everyone, people with disabilities sometimes need support when making decisions or planning for the future. Supported Decision-Making (SDM) is a tool that can help people with disabilities understand and make decisions about their lives. Using SDM, people with disabilities can make decisions to the full extent of their capacity, even as they get needed support.

Supported Decision-Making

Supported Decision-Making (SDM) allows people with disabilities to pick supporters to help them make choices. These trusted advisors, or supporters, can be anyone from friends and family members, to professionals. The supporters agree to help the person with a disability understand, consider, and communicate decisions. When the need arises, the person with a disability works with their supporters to get the information and accommodations they need to make their decisions.



Everyone is Unique

SDM can be used in all types of decision-making. These choices could be about where to live, where to work, how to spend money, what medical choices to make, or anything else. SDM can also be used along with other decision-making supports like power of attorney and conservatorships. In all situations, the goal is to be able to honor the person's preferences. You do not need a lawyer to use SDM like you do for other decision-making supports.

“Andrew feels strongly about learning how to make his own decisions with supports. He says he likes the freedom to consult with others before making decisions. As his parents, we are helping him identify a strong circle of support to assist him as he navigates young adulthood. We are currently working with Andrew on supported decision-making skills.”

– The Braach family

Learn More

■ **The TN Center for Decision-Making Support - TNDecisionMaking.org**

A virtual resource about decision-making supports and future planning for people with disabilities. Learn more about Supported Decision Making and request a meeting with an advocate through the website 'Contact us' page to discuss your unique needs.

■ **Easy Read Edition of Supported Decision-Making - bit.ly/EasyReadSDM**

■ **National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making - SupportedDecisionMaking.org**

SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING IN ACTION

Everyone is different. The way you get support might be right for you but wrong for someone else. Fortunately, using SDM can look different for everyone.

When using SDM, supporters help the person with a disability find the tools they need to make and communicate their own choices. SDM is a lot like having reasonable accommodations - it is individualized and about making sure a person gets their needs met.

Many families, support staff, and other advocates are already using SDM in their everyday lives. Having conversations that help a person learn decision-making skills by making her own choices with help and guidance is supported decision-making.

Examples of using SDM:

- Giving extra time to discuss choices or try options before making a final decision
- Bringing a supporter to help take notes during important appointments
- Working with a team, like a Circle of Support or Individual Education Program (IEP) team
- Role-playing activities
- Creating lists of likes and dislikes
- Explaining information in visual or audio form instead of written



“I use the support of my family and make my own decisions. When I have decisions to make, I discuss them with my family and ask questions. Sometimes I ask for explanations then I make the best decision for me. My family supports me in my decisions.”

– Princeton

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